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DOUBLE CROSSED CLOTHING

Double Crossed Clothing is a Glasgow-based start up aiming to "celebrate women and awesomeness". Yaz Duncan caught up with one of the founders, Lindsey Watson, to find out more.

You describe Double Crossed Clothing as a "feminist clothing brand". Do you describe it this way because you feel that other contemporary fashion brands are explicitly non feminist or misogynistic?

The whole idea of double crossed clothing was born as an antidote to the "lad culture" clothing that litter our high street. At the time I worked for an international fashion store and had phoned our head office numerous times to complain that certain new lines in the menswear department were inappropriate and misogynistic. A lot of t-shirt designs seemed to be about poking fun at others. I wanted clothes that were funny but not at someone else's expense. I realised that instead of just complaining about things that I didn't like I should start creating things I did!

The vests and t-shirts are unisex fitting. Did you feel it was important to keep them gender neutral rather than go down the "extremely tight fitted t shirts for women and regular fit t-shirts for men" route?

Although there is one style that is a "feminine" fit, most of the clothing is gender neutral yes. This was a conscious decision made for the simple fact that no matter what gender you identify as our bodies aren't hugely different. I want the trans gender, cis and gender fluid customers to all feel as comfortable and confident in my clothing as possible. I also feel that Double Crossed has something for everyone with my customers fitting the above categories.

Where do you find inspiration for your designs and how do you want a person wearing your clothes to feel?

I am a pretty selfish person to tell you the truth. I think of things that I want and I make them so that I can have them. All inspiration comes from my need to have awesome things. Most of the time though my inspiration comes from the incredible human beings around me. I play roller derby and I am surrounded by amazing, strong athletic humans. The sport itself is one of the most progressive and inclusive sports with regard to queer and trans athletes. They are my inspiration. I want them to put on a double crossed item and feel great! I want them to feel proud of who they are and know their individual strength.

You have designed a t shirt to raise funds and awareness for the organisation Stamp Out Media Patriarchy (STAMP). What would you say is their main goal?

Hannah Brown, one of my fellow roller derby team mates, works for Rape Crisis Scotland and had approached me to design a t-shirt to raise funds for STAMP. STAMP is an organisation run through Lanarkshire Rape Crisis which aims to empower young people to challenge gender stereotypes in the media. The organisation recognises that gender stereotypes which are most affected by those stereotypes are teenagers, so this organisation allows young people to use the media in a positive way to educate other young people, get involved in campaigns and activism and learn about feminism. Hannah

was a fan of Double Crossed and I jumped at the chance to help out.

Some people think feminism is a four letter word (those people obviously can't spell). Have you had any negative response for branding your clothes as feminist fashion?

The response to the clothing has been amazing. I've had nothing but love. I'm sure there are people viewing it as negative but I'm happy for them not to buy from me. This brand was always about positivity so that's all I concentrate on. My favourite moments are the times in the gym when you get a nod from a woman on the rowing machine while she looks at your "strong "vest or the big mean looking biker that cracks a smile when he sees the "grow a pair" t-shirt. I am blessed to have so many informed, intelligent open minded people around me so I haven't seen any negativity.

FOR MORE ON THE VENTURE, CHECK OUT FACEBOOK.COM/DOUBLE-CROSSED-CLOTHING.

MY RAD FAT DIARY

Halina Rifai brings us the latest entry in her series of journals.

I greet you a bit later than usual from the abyss of the fat kingdom. I am on a challenge now to lose 100lbs by the end of the year. I never thought that would be possible in my lifetime but there is light at the end of the tunnel. A pinhole, granted, but still some form of white.

It has been a far more positive month. I have felt stronger in my head and I think that's because I have been exercising

more. I have established now that I am the type of person that needs to be physically active. I need plenty of oxygen flowing through my lungs and I need to test my strengths and understand that I am capable of achieving what I often I think I cannot. I still feel like a massive walloper on gym equipment but sometimes nothing beats that feeling of your heart rate going ten to the dozen whilst listening to the deafening sounds of pumping electro in your ears. I am also looking forward to the day that my arse doesn't eclipse the bike seat leaving a red indentation on my arse.

Recently, Mina Green wrote a piece 'My Problem With Plus Size' for TYCI (you can read it at tyci.org.uk). Lots of people asked me to read it thinking I would really appreciate it and in part I did. However, there were some parts that I did feel completely defensive over. A natural reaction as I suppose you feel you represent the obese, the larger person, the quiet overweight sector etc.

I have to stress I completely understand Mina's main points about the fashion industry's exploitation, or rather I suppose I should say that is my interpretation of it. I know for a fact that the fashion industry couldn't give a fuck about me, they just care about my money - that we agree on. I also don't agree with glamourising being unhealthy and the act of it. It is almost like a Charlie Brooker script of Black Mirror. It is part of a bigger picture though. In one way or another, we are blindly supporting systems that are laughing at us and bleeding us of cash. I think at times we can all be hypocritical.. What is right though?

Tess Holliday, who has become well known in the fight for an acceptance for plus size models, is someone that I believe is trying to do great things. Again, I understand what Mina is trying to say with regard to the fashion industry but if we all gave up on trying to fight for people and what we believe to be good then we would be completely fucked. I don't care what anyone says. I was and still am obese, that is the first time I have admitted that in writing. You cannot judge people on the way they look…

Mina wrote, "Hey, good work chowing down those cheeseburgers, let's put your heart under even more strain - in the name of fashion, darling!" That for a start is just stereotypical dross. I have always been fat. I was 10lbs 8 oz.'s at birth and I have never been small. It wasn't through gorging on junk food. Yeah, my parents tried to do stuff about it. I did, and obviously I am conquering it now but even though I am on a massive weight loss journey, I will NEVER judge another person's size based on a food type or what other peoples' opinions tell me to. Unless you live this life, and I have for 36 years, you will never understand what is going on in my head and others. I am happy that someone is trying to make my life easier. I am happy that someone is fighting for me to be able to walk down the street without being abused or mocked. Just for once, someone is in my corner. It buys me time to just enjoy a bit more of it whilst I change myself enough to be happy…

I know the Lagerfelds, the Wangs and even the Beckhams of this world will never accept me. I have dealt with that but the Hollidays do and for me that is one of the most wonderful things I could ask for. I am no longer a complete fat freak. I am Halina.

Till next time x.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT. TO READ THE FULL ARTICLE AND MORE IN THE RAD FAT DIARY SERIES, HEAD TO TYCI.ORG.UK

a note from the collective

TYCI is a not for profit collective run by women. Although we are based in Glasgow, we have an amazing variety of contributors who stretch far and wide across the globe. We are run entirely by volunteers who generously give up their own time, feelings, ideas, and often money to help us celebrate all things woman.

In the short while that we have been functioning, we have expanded from a small monthly club night to an international multimedia platform and events series. All of what we do now is formed entirely on passionate people coming forward to lend their own ideas of what they want to see and do with the collective.

We are always looking for more contributors to help broaden the discussion and so if you are ever interested in getting involved in the collective, please do contact us because we would love to hear from you.

You can find us on all the socials @tyciblog
or email us at contact.tyci@gmail.com.

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SPINE

Today on the blog, new contributor Laura Waddell kicks off with the first edition of Spine, a new regular book club feature for TYCI.

Hello and welcome to my first book column for TYCI.

I work at a Glasgow-based publishing house, and as such, I think about books all day, every day. But outside of promoting my e-book backlist or getting excited about forthcoming releases during working hours, I still end up spending a lot of my spare time reading, tweeting about reading, or surrounding myself with readers and writers. Work / life balance concerns aside, I'm here to share what I've been reading recently and chat with you in the comments about what *you've* been reading. Let's start an on-going TYCI book conversation and introduce each other to new books and new perspectives. Recommendations and comments are encouraged!

Since beginning my career in publishing my tastes have diversified. I've stopped splashing exclusively in the cosy, academic, everyone-I-read-is-dead puddle of university and have started to discover new voices not as often heard in beloved lists of classics or Modernist icons. Projects like

the brilliant #readwomen on Twitter encouraging us to think about the gender balance of what we read, the Vida Count providing annually hard, uncomfortable stats on the demographics of literary reviews, and prizes such as the Green Carnation awarding LGBT writing shine a light on a whole new world of potential talent to discover. And I find that exciting, don't you? You can expect that kind of thing in this column, a bit of publishing chat, and a bit of translation, too.

Over the summer I started to notice the hashtag #FerranteFever on Twitter, increasing in usage with each month. More in July than in June, and more still in August. Curious, wondering whether it was a bug I wanted to catch, I sought it out in a bookshop and immediately put it back down again. That cover! Or, to be more precise, those covers. The Neopolitan series is a series of novels by Elena Ferrante, set in Naples mid twentieth century, following the friendship of two young girls through to adulthood across the span of four books. My Brilliant Friend, the first volume, is hideous. Truly. See the photo below to see the kitsch but not in a cool way front cover, reminiscent of sickly wedding cake icing, of desperate petrol station greetings cards. They don't look like the exciting, unusual new writing contained within, but like they're destined to linger unsold in a car book sale box alongside perfume that has gone off and teacups you remember your aunt having in the '80s. Never judge a book by its cover, I hear some of you cry. But that is nonsense. Good design should be representative of the content, and an enhancement of the pleasure. And who doesn't like taking a good book-and-coffee snapshot? Although publisher Europa Editions claim it was a deliberate choice, whatever aesthetic it is referencing is lost on me.

I overcame my aversion only on the strength of the overwhelmingly positive chatter I was hearing about the series, and oh! OH! I'm glad I did.

The first night after beginning My Brilliant Friend, I fell asleep with the book in my hands and had feverish dreams about childhood friends and episodes I'd long forgotten. The story focuses on the complicated relationship between two girls Elena and Lina, a friendship complex not only for the usual, coming-of-age reasons close friendships between kids can be complex, but for the eerily insightful way Elena Ferrante weaves in often harsh, fateful impact of societal factors. I'm so impressed by what seems like a rare ability to put on paper insights into poverty, envy, money, girlhood, corruption, and community, and the way in which these factors impact our lives and options. As a record of working class female experience and associated pressures, it feels powerful, fresh, and important, unlike anything I've read before. It's also so utterly readable, told in the recounting of domestic, everyday episodes. I inhaled the first two in the series, equally frustrated by and identifying with with girls, and am soon to begin the third. #FerranteFever - I've caught it and I thoroughly recommend you let me sneeze on you and catch it too. I would love, love, love to talk about it with some TYCI readers. I think many of you would love it. Please do comment if you've read or are

planning to pick it up.

I've also recently been following the translated fiction book club organised by English Pen's Jonathan Ruppin. The book club takes place in London, but I'm reading along from a distance and following the Facebook group. August's read was The Silence and The Roar by

Nihad Sirees, translated from Arabic by Max Weiss (I'm a little behind schedule.) The title refers to the inability to express contrary political opinions in a climate of political brutality and sycophancy for a Dear Leader, and the author himself wrote it in self-imposted exile from Syria. I'm not in love with the style of the writing, finding it for the most part a little unfocused, but as a record of experience from a writer of a country very much in our news at the moment, I'm glad I picked it up, especially for the occasional powerful moment of heart-wrenching unfairness and cruelty serving as a brief insight into life without freedom of expression or democracy. Next up in the English Pen Translated Book Club list is The Vegetarian by Han Kang, and translated from Korean by Deborah Smith. Now there's a good book cover. Nicer still, I was given a copy by a friend. Hopefully, I'll have read it by my next column.

Finally, on a Friday night train to London recently, I read a manuscript from work. Reading manuscripts is not actually my job, but occasionally, just occasionally, I'm unable to stop myself picking one up that I like the look of and carrying it off. It's a forthcoming short story collection by Lara Williams, and it's one of the most exciting things I've read recently, making me forget the indignity of lack of leg room or wifi on the five and a half hour journey. It's not out until 2016, although one story has been previously published on McSweeneys if you fancy a look, but the way in which she manages to pull out all the weird moments of 20s/30s existing, working, and dating; all foibles and impulses and moments of heart singing and things lurking in the shadows, real and recognisable but not clichéd (Yes! Me too!) made me fall for it, and I read it all weekend between meetings, on the tube and in hotel rooms. It made me happy, it made me smile, it made me remember I love what I do - it even made me stop refreshing my phone when I know I don't have a signal (a maddening habit.)

LAURA'S NEXT COLUMN WILL BE UP ON TYCI.ORG.UK SOON. TELL US WHAT YOU'VE BEEN READING BY HITTING US UP ON OUR SOCIALS (@TYCIBLOG).

HUNGER MAKES ME A MODERN GIRL

TYCI AND GLASGOW WOMEN'S LIBRARY ARE PROUD TO BE HOSTING THE ONLY SCOTTISH DATE ON CARRIE BROWNSTEIN'S BOOK TOUR. BROWNSTEIN WILL SPEAK WITH JOURNALIST NICOLA MEIGHAN ABOUT HER AUTOBIOGRAPHY, HUNGER MAKES ME A MODERN GIRL (OUT 5 NOVEMBER).

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TUNE IN AT SUBCITY.ORG/SHOWS/TYCI.

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